

THE INFLUENCE OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON PERFORMANCE OF EMPLOYEES AT NATIONAL IRRIGATION BOARD IN KENYA

¹*Veronicah Ndunge Munuve

¹Department of Business studies, University of Nairobi

*Corresponding author's e-mail: ndungemunuve@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

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Purpose: Globally competitive enterprises and business organizations depend greatly on the uniqueness of the human resource management in order to achieve successfully their competitive advantages, therefore the human resources practices and their contribution on the employee performance has been greatly researched on by different scholars. The current study focused on the influence of human resource management practices on the performance of employees at the National Irrigation Board in Kenya.

Design/ Methodology/Approach: The current study adopted the use of the descriptive research. This research design was used to enable the researcher establish how human resources management practices influence employees' performance at National Irrigation Board. A response of 100 was adopted where a response rate of 81 respondents was realized. Questionnaire was used to collect data from the employees of NIB from the 8 selected stations.

Findings: The study concluded that there are a number of variables on the human resource planning such as having the right people at the right time doing the right job, management focusing on the employee competencies, providing solutions necessary to satisfy the human resource needs, utilization of the changing needs which are related to the utilization of its employees, application of the systematic procedures for collecting, analyzing and documenting information provided about a particular job are all necessary and important in enhancing employees performance

Contribution to policy and practice: Differential training is necessary for the top management of the National Irrigation Board to initiate human resource planning to allow for the improvement of effectiveness.

Originality/Value: The study extends the literature on Human resources management. This study help reduce incidences of labor turnover and save the National irrigation board from incurring unnecessary recruitment costs.

BACKGROUND

Globally competitive enterprises greatly depend on how unique human capital in an organization is managed for the realization of a successful competitive advantage, therefore the human resources (HR) practices and their contribution on the employee performance has been greatly researched by different scholars. According to Guest (2011), human resource management practices (HRMP) is extremely crucial aspect and it is fundamental to analyze them in diverse situations to validate their contributions towards the employees' performance. In the recent past, the trajectory of HRMP has changed significantly owing to the global environment, privatization, competitions and the technological advancements not forgetting the wavering social, political and economic factors that ensured that organizations operationalize innovative practices that will guarantee employees performances. Paul (2013) asserts that human resource practices remains fundamental for any organization to expand and went ahead to identify array of human resource practices which are not limited to reward management, training, procurement, evaluations and also security in employment. According to Hundley (2008), human resource management is a crucial facet for the attainment and maintenance of a competitive advantage thus human resource managers have been tasked with the responsibility of coaching employees with precise expertise and the capabilities that will enhance the competitive gains of the organization.

According to (Minbaeva, 2012), Human Resource Management Practices (HRMP) are approaches used by organizations in managing employees by accelerating the progress of capabilities that are aimed at sustaining competitive advantage. Therefore, HRMP are methods used in managing people. Organizations ought to execute best human resource practices that suit how they operate (Armstrong, 2012). Further, Delery and Doty (1996) described human resource practices as internally dependable policies that are designed and executed to ensure that organization's human resources add into the realization of the set goals.

Human resource management practices are defined as the practice in organizations and policies that influence behavior (Dessler, 2011). The practice includes choosing human resource requirements, reference checks, recruitment, training, reward, assessing and also labor relations, health and safety and fair concerns among others (Dessler, 2007). Human resource practices have been defined in several characteristics which are not limited to; a system that catch the attention of employees, improves their experience, encourages them to work and maintain them for a period of time so as to comply with the effective conclusion and continued existence of the business entity and employees (Schuler and Jackson 1987).

The performance of employees is related to the ability of the employee to effectively and efficiently complete tasks as expected by the employing authority. The performance of employees concerns the quality of output as per the set standard (Mathis and Jackson, 2009). According to Gilbert (2008), employee performance is a function of motivation and capability. The employer provides performance support by working on the environment and making sure the hindrances to one's performance is minimized. Failure of employees to perform to the expectations of the employer is not always because of the inability of the employee but rather influenced by external factors like the office support system (Ströh, 2001). Upon joining new institutions, employees bring with them certain expectations that influence their performance and

output. The needs could be psychological values, physical values or both (Davis and Newstrom, 2006).

Research Problem

The alignment of employees' perspectives to the organizational objectives is a key responsibility of human resource. The way an organization manage its employees distinguishes one organization to the other, particularly today when there is increased competitiveness. Depending on the human resource management approach, an organization can either succeed or fail. With the dynamics and turbulences in the market to date, organizations are increasingly looking for new strategies to help them respond to the changing business environment. The organizations that have factored the human capital aspect have turned out successful. Realization of the critical role played by employees is a great step towards organizations' competitiveness. The changing dynamics are exacerbated by globalization that has made the world a global village in which one has to remain competitive to survive. As such, shifting organizations' focus to the management of human resource cannot be overemphasized (Aquinas, 2008). This calls for proper tapping and management of organizational human capital if the objectives of the organization were to be achieved. The Human resource department thus has a duty to initiate successful human capital management strategies (Kohli & Deb, 2010).

The National Irrigation Board has faced a number of challenges including high employee turnover and this has had a negative impact on its competitiveness. It was therefore imperative and timely to conduct a study like the present one to understand how the management of human resources in the organization contribute to its performance.

Saira (2016) examined the influence of human resource practice in the growth of textile industry in Pakistan. His study considered the following variables; compensation, career development, employees evaluation and employees engagement impact on the performance of the employees. The study revealed that for the employees to be productive there is need to sharpen their motivations. On the same vein, Amendi (2015) examined the impact of the human resource management on the performance at micro financial institutions. He found that HR practices resulted in a positive employee performance. Dimba & K'Obonyo (2009) examined the effects of human resource planning on the performance of the organization and demonstrated that employees resourcing and reward practices are associated with their performance as well. Ndungu (2011) conducted a study on the job satisfaction and the organization performance and revealed that satisfied employees perform better as compared to the employees who were demotivated in the organization. The aim of this study was to investigate how organizational HRMP influence the performance of the National Irrigation Board employees. At the time of conducting this study, no known study has focused on examining the influence of human resource factors in the performance of National Irrigation Board employees hence the need for this study.

Study Objectives

The main objective of the study was to investigate how human resource practices influence the performance of the National Irrigation Board employees.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Human Resource Management Practices

According to De Cieri et al., (2008), practice in organizations and policies that influence the behavior is described as the human resource management. The practice involves choosing human resource requirements, reference checks, recruitment, training, reward, assessing and also labor relations, health and safety and fair concerns among others (Dessler, 2007). The human resource practices have been described in several characteristics which include; system that catch the attention of the employees, improves their experience, encourages them to work and also maintain them for a period of time so that the employees are able to comply with the effective conclusion and the continued existence of the business entity and employees as well (Schuler and Jackson 1987). Some of the HR practices have been perceived as a set of reliable guiding principles that are within planned and are employed to ensure that an organization's employees contribute to the achievement of the institution's goals as well (Delery & Doty, 1996).

According to Gary Dessler (2008), human resource management practices is also about the formulation and execution of human resource systems which are the human resource policies and the activities that produce the employee competencies and behaviors needed for the achievement of an organization's strategic objectives. An organization that implements human resource management practices is able to adapt to the turbulent business environment and thus meet customers' demands and hence the company's overall performance (Guest 1989). Similar findings are shared by Huselid (1996) whose study revealed that HRMP significantly improves employees' performance. Human resource practices can also help institutions reduce their cost, promote operating efficiency, increase innovation, revolutionize ability and increase employee's performance (Dyer, 1983). According to Grobler et al (2006), employees are investments that will if effectively managed and developed provide long-term productivity. There are various components of the human resource practices as discussed in prose;

Measures of employee performance

Human resources are a significant element of an organization, and should be optimized for better organizational results. Human resource is a system of interconnected activities, processes and functions that aim at not only attracting but maintaining an organizations' human resources. Employee's performance is an indicator of the overall organization's performance. If the performance of the employees is poor, then the competitiveness of the organization is negatively influenced and the reverse is true. Firms must thus put structures in place that allow for an optimal performance of the employees. Putting of these structures call for a proper human resource management plan that ties the abilities of the employees to the overall goal of the organization (Dreikorn, 1995; Guest, 2001). Human resource practices needs to recognize the different abilities of an organization's employee and provide incentives for employees to fully use their skills and to contribute in decision-making. With such a system in place, employee

performance is enhanced (Appelbaum et.al, 2000). The impact of HR practices in employee performance was noted to be immense in a study by Deng, Menguc, and Benson (2003). HRMP also enhance employee satisfaction, satisfied employees tend to give their best and hence organizations' performance is boosted (Bjorkman and Fan, 2002).

Human resource management practices and employees performance

Past studies have revealed a positive association between HRMP and employees' performance. Tessemer (2006) investigated the degree to which HRMP affects the employee's performance in Eritrea. From his research work, it was determined that the execution of human resource practices can successfully boost the performance. Further Kiptis et.al (2014) studied HR practices effects on the employee performance in Kuresoi South District in Kenya and found that there was a positive correlation between wellbeing practices, reward, job security and performance of the employees. Therefore, in order to motivate employees in the large-scale tea farms both comprehensive training and job security measures should be provided to the employees. Kai (2007), in a study on firms listed on the Australian Stock Exchange established that HR practices are indeed associated with the employees' performance.

Mugambi (2017) conducted a study on the effect of perceived HRMP on employee performance at Kenya Medical Training College, Nairobi campus and established that a greater majority of the respondents were illiterate on human resource management practices and the concept of employee job performance. The study revealed that KMTC needs to incorporate other aspects of coaching and mentoring, knowledge management, change management, talent management as well as team building to couple the human resource management practices so as to have a positive influence on employee job performance. The study recommended that KMTC should adopt human resource management policy and practices to ensure that the human resource practices can indeed influence positive employee job performance.

Muga, (2012) conducted a study on the contributions of the strategic human resource management practices to the financial performance of the Savings and Credit Co-operatives Societies in the public universities, the study revealed that the increase in profitability levels were as a result of the capital base, membership and the dividend pay-out that can be clearly attributed to good human resource management practices that have resulted in recruitment and selection of qualified and committed employees who are committed to the organizations missions. A study by Nyabuto (2016) examining how compensation practices influence employee performance revealed that compensation practices influenced performance positively.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The current study adopted the use of the descriptive research. This research design was used to enable the researcher establish how human resources management practices influence employees performance at National Irrigation Board. The target population was the staff working in all stations of National Irrigation Board. The researcher targeted 8 stations of National Irrigation Board which are spread across the country with a total population of 543 staff.

FINDINGS**Logit model Analysis****Table 1 logit model analysis**

Steps	Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step	15.737	3	.001
Block	15.737	3	.001
Model	15.737	3	.001

Direct logistic regression was performed to assess the influence of HR practices on the performance of NIB staff performance. The model included five independent variables; human resource planning, recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and reward, and employee relations. The first step involved testing the model reliability in testing the five factors. The result in table 1 indicates that model was significant in predicting the influence of HR practices on employee performance. This was supported by model significant at $0.001 < 0.05$. Thus, the results of the model are deemed valid and reliable.

Model Summary**Table 2 Model Summary**

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell Square	R Nagelkerke R square
1	28.663a	0.232	0.302

As shown in table 2 the results indicated that the model as a whole explained between 23.2% (Cox and Snell R²) and 30.2% (Nagelkerke R²) of the variance in NIB, with 69.8% of the change in the employee performance at NIB explained by factors not in the study model.

Table 3 Coefficients of determination

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.812	0.186	0.567	4.903	.000
	Humanresource planning	0.712	0.287	0.714	2.829	.005
	Recruitment	0.752	0.207	0.611	3.440	.001
	Training	0.678	0.289	0.662	2.692	.007
	Compensation	0.875	0.276	0.572	2.982	.003
	Employee relation	0.672	0.317	0.578	2.120	.033

The research used a multiple regression model

$$Y = 0.812 + 0.712X_1 + 0.752X_2 + 0.678X_3 + 0.875X_4 + 0.672X_5 \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

The regression equation above has established that taking (recruitment and selection, human resource planning, training and development, compensation and reward, and employee relations), performance of National Irrigation Board staff, will be 0.812. The findings presented also show that increase in HR planning leads to 0.712 increase in the score of the performance of NIB staff, if all other variables are held constant. The variables was significant since 0.005 is less than 0.05.

Further the study revealed that a marginal increase in recruitment and selection results in 0.752 increase in the performance of NIP staff with a p-value of 0.001, the contribution of recruitment and selection was found to be significant since the value 0.001 is less than 0.05. The regression results further revealed that a unit increase in training and development lead to an increase in National Irrigation Board employee performance by 0.678 with a p-value of 0.007 which is less than 0.05 imply the contribution of the variable to employee performance was significant. It was also revealed that a unit increase in compensation and reward resulted in 0.875 increase in NIB staff performance with a p-value of 0.003 which is less than 0.05, implying significance of the variable in contributing to NIB staff performance. Finally, the results show that a unit increase in staff relations increased NIB staff performance by 0.672 with a p-value of 0.033 which is less than 0.05 implying a significant contribution of the variable to NIB staff performance.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that there are a number of variables on the human resource planning such as having the right people at the right time doing the right job, management focusing on the employee competencies, providing solutions necessary to satisfy the human resource needs, utilization of the changing needs which are related to the utilization of its employees, application of the systematic procedures for collecting, analyzing and documenting information about a particular job is provided and necessary and important in enhancing employees performance. The study concluded that applicants should be informed about the qualifications required to perform the job before being actually being hired, the study further concluded that organizations

should obtain suitable employees candidates with good experience for them to be able to do their work effectively, further it was revealed that advertising for vacant posts other than through newspapers can be done through other means as well, line managers and human resource managers participate in the selection process and that the selection system selects those having the desired knowledge, skills and attitude to perform. The study also concludes that employee compensation (financial or otherwise) significantly influences the performance of not only the employee but for the organization as well. Among the elements that influence the performance of NIB staff performance, compensation was revealed to have the greatest contribution. The study therefore concludes that a compensated staff will in equal measure be committed to the organization and hence the improved performance.

Areas for Further Research and recommendations

From the findings, the study recommends the following;

There is need for the management of the National Irrigations Board to initiate strategies that allow for human resource planning if the organization were to remain competitive in a way that the institutional culture appreciates human capital. Putting such a human resource plan in place would mean that the organization is not short of human resource in case of turn over issues.

Considering the essence of employee reward system established by the study, it is imperative for the National Irrigation Board to have such a system in place. With such a system, employees will be motivated and would give their best. Employees will also be rewarded in a manner that is commensurate to their respective contribution. The overall benefit will be NIB because its performance will be enhanced.

The study suggests a similar study in future whose objective would be to confirm these findings while also incorporating the perceptions of other critical stakeholders such as customers, government and suppliers within the industry. There is an opportunity to carry out a future study whose aim would be to isolate the influence of other critical events and factors on the employees' performance. Furthermore, this being a descriptive study which offers an opportunity to carry out future explanatory research that aims at investigating the relationship between HRMP and performance across the irrigation sector, a study like that would be useful for the policy makers, regulating authorities and also the decision makers within the irrigation sector.

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